

Abstract 604

TITLE: Initiating an AIDS Ministry Model in a Faith Community

AUTHOR: Griffith, A.M.

ISSUE: Historically, faith communities have lagged behind social agencies in meeting the needs of HIV-positive individuals within their communities due to minimal theological considerations, ignorance of the medical aspects of the condition, ignorance of the issues involved in counseling, and ignorance of efficient care-giving techniques.

SETTING: This intervention program takes place in a church or synagogue, but not connected with regular liturgical activities. The intended audience consists of church leaders, those interested in participating in an HIV/AIDS ministry, and individuals who are wondering if they can feel secure in disclosing their seropositivity.

PROJECT: To address these issues, the presenter has developed a seminar consisting of six sessions which deal with the theological rationales of AIDS ministry, medical issues (including transmission and prevention), counseling issues (including ways parents can educate their children with a view toward behavior modification), the formation and function of care teams, working with and utilizing the resources of community agencies, and calculating the impact on the faith community.

RESULTS: The seminar participants reported that the material was relevant and understandable. They emerged equipped to handle most HIV-related situations and to protect themselves and their acquaintances. They appeared ready to volunteer.

LESSONS LEARNED: Most faith communities willingly deal with the AIDS crisis given the proper motivation, leadership, and education. Generally, their involvement is contingent on the presence of an AIDS case within the community. The faith communities' propensity to enter a commitment to AIDS ministry can also be estimated by examining their involvement in similar ministries of benevolence and outreach.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Anna M. Griffith

Address: 3700 Oakbriar Lane
Bedford, TX 76021

Telephone: (817) 485-6214

E-mail: annagriff@aol.com